

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
25 September 2003 (25.09.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/077859 A2(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **A61K**

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US03/07727

(22) International Filing Date: 12 March 2003 (12.03.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/363,807 13 March 2002 (13.03.2002) US(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **MERCK & CO., INC.** [US/US]; 126 East Lincoln Avenue, Rahway, NJ 07065-0907 (US).

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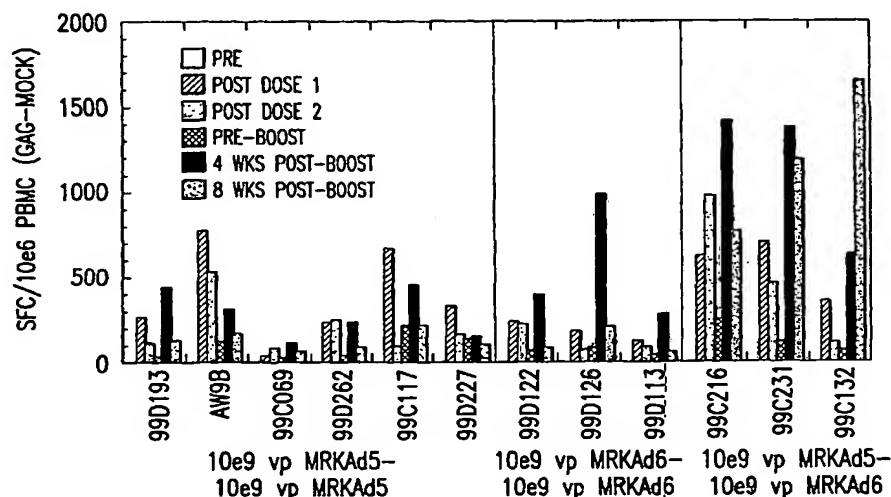
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(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD OF INDUCING AN ENHANCED IMMUNE RESPONSE AGAINST HIV



(57) Abstract: An efficient means of inducing an immune response against human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) utilizing specific prime-boost regimes is disclosed. The specific prime-boost regimes employ a heterologous prime-boost protocol employing recombinant adenoviral vectors of alternative and distinct serotypes comprising exogenous genetic material encoding a common HIV antigen. Vaccines administered into living vertebrate tissue in accordance with the disclosed regimes, preferably a mammalian host, such as a human or a non-human mammal of commercial or domestic veterinary importance, express the HIV-1 antigen (e.g., Gag), inducing a cellular immune response which specifically recognizes HIV-1. It is believed that the disclosed prime/boost regime will offer a prophylactic advantage to previously uninfected individuals and/or provide a therapeutic effect by reducing viral load levels within an infected individual, thus prolonging the asymptomatic phase of HIV-1 infection.

507,237



WO 03/077859 A2



SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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Published:

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